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REPORT ON TRAINING IN BETTER WORK METHODS FOR OLDER 4-H BOYS AND GIRLS
AND LOCAL LEADERS IN WASHINGTON, IDAHO, AND OREGON, JUNE 1946

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Arrangements were made by K. W. Ingwalson with the State club leaders in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon for including some training on better work methods in their summer school for 1946. L. M. Vaughan, of the Labor Utilization Division, Extension Farm Labor Program, conducted the training periods.

Purpose of Training

There were three reasons for giving this training to the leaders and older boys and girls. First--basic training in how to perform work more easily and effectively is sound and useful training for leaders. It can be applied to almost anything they do. Second--better work methods will help farm people get more and better work done in less time and with less effort. Better living on the farm will result from more efficient use of the labor, materials, and equipment available. Third--if the activity sponsored by an electrical equipment company on "Better Farm and Home Methods Electric Contest" is to be most helpful to young people, the local leaders must know more about the principles of work simplification and the procedures for analyzing and improving a job.

With these three objectives in mind, instruction was outlined to fit the 4-H summer school program at Washington State College, which called for a 1-hour period daily with each group for 4 days. The purpose of each period was as follows:

1st period--To become familiar with the steps in analyzing a job and working out a better method.

2d period--To provide an opportunity for the group to think through the improvements that might be made on a farm job normally done by boys and girls.

3d period--To bring out the points that need to be considered in improving hand jobs of a repetitive nature, and routine chore jobs done in and around buildings.

4th period--To explain how work simplification can be helpful to those who have work to do on a farm or in a home; and to review the forms provided in the Better Farm and Home Methods Electric Contest.

The same four periods were fitted into the program in Idaho and Oregon, with but minor adaptations. In total, instruction was given to eight groups--one to adult leaders only, two to older boys and girls and leaders, two to boys and girls, two to girls only, one to boys only.

Outline of Material Presented

The following outline gives in detail the material used in these three States. The order of events was altered to fit conditions in each State and the illustrative material changed for the different groups.

1st session--Demonstration of assembling two sheets of paper into an 8-page folder.

- Break-down of the job by the class (entered in EFL Cir. 22 step I and on the board).
- Showing of 16-mm. film "Take It Apart and Put It Together Again" (up to new method).
- Discussion of how job might be improved (reference to steps II and III, EFL Cir. 22).
- Showing of balance of movie (the new method).
- Entering steps of new method in EFL Cir. 22 and on board.
- Discussion of step IV, proposal sheet.

2d session--Hand out and discuss poultry house lay-out (original arrangement).

- Have each person make his own rearrangement for saving time and steps in watering, feeding, cleaning, and gathering eggs (sketched on blank sheet).
- Have four persons put their plans on board and explain them.
- Hand out and discuss poultry house lay-out (suggested arrangement).
- Trace with colored twine (thumbtacks already placed) a before-and-after trip on an enlarged chart to illustrate savings made.
- Dramatization of making changes on the Sam Thompson farm (record No. 7 of the 8-point dairy program "The Farmer in the Dough").

3d session--Demonstration of method vs. skill (putting matches in board-- participation by four members--timed and methods discussed).

- Hand out and discuss the principles of work simplification for repetitive hand jobs and routine chore jobs.

--Application to farm jobs (16-mm. film, "Picking Up Potatoes").

--Application to home jobs (photographs and models).

4th session--Hand out and discuss summary of changes made by a dairy farmer (2 by 2 slides on Vermont farm).

--Hand out and comment on other specific results from farm work simplification activities.

--Presentation of "There Is a Better Way" (slidefilm)

--Review of "Better Methods" manual.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The following statements are made in order that others may have the benefit of the instructor's thinking based on personal reactions, and comments received:

1. A course of this type is extremely helpful to leaders, and they apparently want more of such instruction.
2. For the younger boys and girls it would be better to have fewer contacts with a larger number, and make the content more in the nature of orientation.
3. The training should always be tailored to fit the conditions, the interests of the group, and the rest of the program. (Usually not enough of the local setting is known by an outside instructor before he arrives, such as size and make-up of group, use to be made of training, how this instruction fits in with program as a whole, and the like.)
4. If important points are to be made, illustrated, and applied, a full 1-hour period is preferable to the 40- or 45-minute period. (This applies to leader groups and not to the younger boys and girls.)
5. A total of 4 hours is not sufficient to prepare a person adequately for conducting local demonstrations in a new field of work. Very little time is available for questions and none for practice. To make the most of the training, provision should be made in advance for someone to follow up later with materials and guidance.
6. The use of visual materials is essential for instruction of this kind. There is need for more specific slides and films carefully selected for the purpose--brief and to the point.

Note: The four 1-hour periods used in this instruction should not be considered as a standard. It was a part of a summer school week devoted to many other subjects. Instruction in better methods may be made a part of general training, as was done in these summer schools, or leader groups may be called together for that specific purpose. The 1- and 2-day leader training courses sponsored by utility companies in a number of States are, of course, a more thorough way of training people for assuming local leadership in the "better work methods" activity.